

VZCZCXYZ0000
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #1718/01 2091112
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 281112Z JUL 09
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4023
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 9846
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 5550
RUEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0986
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 7626
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1622
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 001718

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: JULY 28, 2009

Summary: The Urdu and English language newspapers on Tuesday differed in their selection of lead stories. The English dailies highlighted the announcement of the government's "new trade policy" while the Urdu newspapers gave prominence to local political developments. Reports on the killing of 20 militants in Khyber air strike by security forces also received wide coverage. Several major dailies highlighted the recovery by the security forces of "more boys who were allegedly trained for suicide bombings in Swat." A statement by the Pakistan Navy spokesman that the launch of "Indian nuclear submarine could trigger arms race in the region" received extensive coverage. All newspapers also reported that an Anti-Terrorism Court sent a former member of the National Assembly, Shah Abdul Aziz, allegedly involved in the murder of Polish engineer, to Adiala Jail on a 14-day remand."

Most major dailies ran editorials on a variety of subjects including the arrest of TNSM (Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi) leader Sufi Mohammad, the newly commissioned Indian nuclear submarine, new U.S. efforts for Mideast Peace and so forth. The populist, often sensational national English daily "The News," noted that "men like Sufi Mohammad have played a part in building the militants armies that today still threaten Swat. It was a mistake to trust him; a bigger mistake still to try and negotiate a deal in Swat." In contrast, the second-largest Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," advocated that "when Swat was on fire it was Sufi Muhammad who played a role for establishing peace in the area. TNSM has never been violent in any period of time." Toeing the line, the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan," maintained that the "government should respect people like Sufi Muhammad, who are trusted by the people. Sufi should be released as soon as possible." End Summary.

News Stories

"Trade Policy Sets Six Per Cent Export Growth Target" "Dawn"
(07/28)

"The government on Monday unveiled a medium-term (2009-12) Strategic Trade Policy Framework, setting an export target of \$18.84 billion for 2009-10 - a six per cent growth over last year's figures. The three-year framework plan focuses on reviving and reforming domestic commerce, diversifying export markets with EU, U.S. and countries which have signed free trade agreements and promoting trade in services sector."

"20 Militants Killed In Khyber Air Strike" "Dawn" (07/28)

"Military helicopters shelled militant hideouts in the afternoon, killing 20 rebels and destroying four of their hideouts, a spokesman for the Frontier Corps, Major Fazal-ur-Rehman, said, adding that the air strikes were ordered after an intelligence tip-off."

"More Boys Trained For Suicide Bombing Held" "Dawn" (07/28)

"After arresting nine young men on Sunday, security forces found on Monday another two boys who were allegedly trained for suicide bombings in Swat. An official said that the boys were aged between 9 and 18 years."

"200 Children Bombers Rescued" "The Nation" (07/28)

"At least 200 children, kidnapped and trained for suicide attacks, have been rescued from Taliban camps in Swat, reported a private TV channel on Monday, quoting officials. Sources say the children's age ranges between 6 to 13 years."

"Indian Nuclear Submarine To Trigger Arms Race: Pak Navy" "The News" (07/28)

"The Pakistan Navy (PN) has said the recent induction of a nuclear submarine into the Indian Navy is a destabilizing step that will jeopardize the security paradigm of the entire region. In a statement issued in Karachi on Monday, a spokesman for the PN said this move of the Indian Navy would have far-reaching effects not only on Pakistan, but also on the entire littoral states of the Indian Ocean and beyond."

"Indian N-Sub Detrimental To Regional Peace: FO" "Dawn" (07/28)
"Reacting to the launch of a nuclear submarine by India, Pakistan vowed on Monday to take all measures for maintaining strategic balance in the region. 'Without entering into an arms race with India, Pakistan will take all appropriate steps to safeguard its security,' Foreign Office Spokesman Abdul Basit said in a statement."

"Ex-MNA Sent To Adiala On 14-Day Remand" "The News" (07/28)

"The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC)-II Rawalpindi on Monday sent former MNA Shah Abdul Aziz, allegedly involved in the murder of Polish engineer, to Adiala Jail on a 14-day judicial remand."

"U.S., China To Boost Stability In Region" "Dawn" (07/28)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said on Monday that the United States and China would work jointly to combat violent extremism and promote stability in Pakistan and Afghanistan."

"U.S. Will want IDPs Settled Before Action In Waziristan" "Dawn" (07/28)

"Pakistan should first create a secure environment for the refugees to return home before launching an operation against Baitullah Mehsud and his militants, says U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke. The U.S. Envoy made this statement in an interview to 'The Washington Post.'"

"Decisive Action Against Mahsud Being Taken: Malik" "The News" (07/28)

"In an exclusive interview with a French TV channel, Interior Minister Rehman Malik has said that a decisive action is being taken against Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) Supreme Commander Baitullah Mahsud."

"Sufi Muhammad Shifted To Prison" "The News" (07/28)

"The detained chief of the banned Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammadi (TNSM), Maulana Sufi Muhammad, was shifted to the Peshawar Central Prison instead of a hospital as was being expected, a source confided to 'The News.' No reaction was noticed in the hometown of Sufi Muhammad, Lal Qilla, in Maidan area in Dir Lower district, over his arrest."

"TNSM Eliminated, Sufi's Trial Soon" "The News" (07/28)

"The banned Tehrik Nifaz Shariat-e-Muhammad (TNSM) has almost been eliminated in the Malakand Division and its detained Chief Maulana Sufi Muhammad is going to be put on trial shortly, 'The News' has learned in Islamabad on Monday."

"11 militants Killed in Dir, Swat" "The News" (07/28)

"Eleven militants were killed in a clearance operation by security forces and local Lashkar in Swat and Dir Upper, while 25 others were apprehended during the ongoing operation Rah-e-Rast. An Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) media update said nine terrorists also surrendered in different parts of the Malakand Division."

"TTP Commander's Aide Among Several Held" "The News" (07/28)

"The police claimed to have arrested Ayaz, a close aide of the Taliban commander Umar Khalid Umar Khalid for Mohmand Agency in a raid on a house in the Mandani area on Monday and recovered CDs and literature about jihad."

"Bridge Damaged, Rocket Fired In Bannu" "The News" (07/28)

"A bridge was damaged in a bomb blast here in the Mambati Bargazai area in Bannu on Monday. The local sources said unknown persons had planted explosives under the bridge that went off, damaging the bridge partially. In another incident, unknown miscreants targeted Miryan Police Station with a rocket, however, it missed the target and landed in a field causing no damage."

"Eight Militants Surrender In Mohmand" "Dawn" (07/28)

"Eight militants including their ringleader Zergavi, surrendered to the political administration of Mohmand Agency on Monday, officials said. They said that militants assured the government of their good conduct in future."

"Five Waziristan Tribesmen Injured In Army Shelling" "The News" (07/28)

"Five tribesmen were critically injured and their houses damaged in shelling by army helicopter gunships at a village near North Waziristan regional headquarters, Miramshah, on Monday, official and tribal sources told 'The News.'"

"Worshipper Killed In Bajaur Mosque Blast" "The News" (07/28)

"One person was killed and another sustained serious injuries when a remote-controlled bomb planted by suspected militants in a mosque went off in Mamond tehsil of Bajaur Agency on Monday."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Sufi Behind Bars," an editorial in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/28)

"Attempting to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' militants is a dangerous game. Men like Sufi Mohammad Khan have played a part in building the militant armies that today still threaten Swat. It was a mistake to trust him; a bigger mistake still to try and negotiate a deal in Swat. We hope the arrest of Sufi is the start of wider-ranging action. People who played a key role in the atrocities committed in Swat, those who hired and trained the teenage suicide bombers arrested from Mingora and committed other acts of criminal violence, for the most part, remain free. They must be tracked down and brought to justice. Only then can there be a hope of putting a final end to the militancy."

"Sufi Muhammad's Arrest Will Create Another Tragedy," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (07/28)

"Tehrik Nifaz Shariat Muhammadi chief Maulana Sufi Muhammad, his two sons and an important commander have been arrested from Peshawar and shifted to so unknown location.... When Swat was on fire it was Sufi Muhammad who played a role for establishing peace in the area."

TNSM has never been violent in any period of time.... The government had broken the peace treaty in Swat under U.S. pressure and pushed our military into fighting with our compatriots.... The arrest of Sufi and his sons has the potential of being provocative and situation can get out of control.... The government should seek Sufi's cooperation for complete peace in the area."

"Sufi Muhammad's Arrest," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (07/28)

"The government should respect people like Sufi Muhammad, who are trusted by the people. The Sufi should be released as soon as possible."

"Yet Again Detention Of Sufi Mohammad," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (07/28)

"Sufi Mohammad is once again arrested along with his two sons and a commander on Sunday. Allegations on Sufi Mohammad by the NWFP government are not new; these have been leveled against him earlier. If Sufi failed to implement the Swat peace deal, same was the performance of the government as it was the government that did not allow the implementation."

"Sufi Arrested, Again," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (07/28)

"Much now depends on the NWFP government's commitment to preparing a specific charge-sheet against the TNSM chief and prosecuting him in court. Holding him incommunicado can backfire and provide fresh ammunition to the supporters of the Malakand insurgency. If Sufi Mohammad, as the Frontier Information Minister claimed on Sunday, is 'the main culprit' in the battle for Malakand then he should be produced in court and brought to book. If he is guilty of inciting violence, Sufi should be made an example of so as to deter others from pursuing a similar course."

"What To Do With Sufi Muhammad?," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (07/28)

"Now that it has owned up his arrest, it should revamp its views on what Sufi Muhammad stands for and how dangerous he could be.... Letting the saintly-looking agents of chaos go is a pattern of state behavior.... But popularity should not divert the state from making a cold-blooded assessment of what such people mean to state security. Sufi Muhammad's case is relevant because his strategy in Swat unfolded in the glare of media publicity and finally created a national consensus against the Taliban when he failed to make it stick.... We simply cannot afford to roll back these achievements and allow Sufi Muhammad to restart his campaign from Peshawar."

"Maulana Sufi Muhammad's Arrest," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (07/28)

"The first report on Maulana Sufi Muhammad's presence in Peshawar came from a private television channel. It was only after this report was aired that the government agencies were compelled to take some action. There are signs that Sufi Muhammad was living in Peshawar under government sponsorship and these agencies are using him for their own objectives."

"Sufi's Arrest," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English daily "The Post" (cir. 5,000) (07/28)

"The cleric activities have proved that he is working against the interest of the country. Now the arrest of Sufi Muhammad should bring normalcy in the area and steps should be taken so that about two million displaced people should live in peace.... The arrest of TNSM is a big achievement of the security forces and it will definitely help in controlling the militancy in Swat and other areas."

"Global Media's War," an op-ed by Manzoor Ali Memon in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (07/28)

"At present, Pakistan is engaged in a media war which is planned and systematic. The country is not only the victim of physical terror but also of media terrorism launched by the foreign media and their sponsors.... Often, questionable and baseless stories are aired by the foreign media which besides tarnishing the image of the country are meant to put pressure on the Pakistani government, leading to an environment of uncertainty, fear and political turmoil. Why are VOA and BBC programs being aired on private Pakistani TV and radio channels? What is the agenda? Are these being run out of altruistic motives? Or is it simply to improve the image of the U.S. and Britain in Pakistan? The public has a right to know under what terms, conditions and arrangements the private channels allow this.... The international media doesn't focus on the positive aspects of Pakistan and simply portrays it as an exporter of terrorism."

"Afghanistan On Tenterhooks," an op-ed by Rahimullah Yusufzai in the populist, often sensational national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (07/28)

"The campaign for Afghanistan's second presidential election has started despite the general insecurity in vast areas of the country and the indifference of the electorate.... Most Afghans feel hopeless about the future and the trust in the government, parliament and politicians has gone down. An American military officer, Col. White, who is commander of the newly-deployed troops in Wardak and Logar provinces near Kabul, echoed the feelings and dilemma of the U.S. authorities regarding Afghanistan's future recently when he publicly stated that it would be a disaster if Karzai was re-elected. It seems that in the absence of a better candidate, President Barack Obama will have to bear with President Karzai for another term, although he publicly criticized the Afghan leader during his own election campaign."

"Will The Surge Work?," an op-ed by Rasul Bakhsh Rais in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (07/28)

"The surge may temporarily push the Taliban back into remote areas, or force them to disperse, but it may not end the insurgency. Around eight years of wars are by any measure too much. And if other options, like negotiations with the adversary, are not exercised because that would convey an impression of weakness, we will see more bloodshed and mayhem in Afghanistan unless one side realizes it cannot go on fighting. This is a war of attrition, and the surge will not make a difference, except raising costs on both sides."

"Nuclear Race Between India And Pakistan," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir. 33,000) (07/28)

"Pakistan is already engulfed with internal problems, but now our eternal enemy India is opening new fronts with international support to weaken Pakistan. Russia supported India to induct a nuclear submarine to enhance its naval defense. Following five big nuclear powers, India is the 6th country with nuclear capable submarine. It was India that unleashed new nuclear arms race in the region, Pakistan will have to reciprocate it, otherwise the balance of power will be shattered."

"Nuclear Submarine: Clear Proof Of India's Aggressive Designs," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (07/28)

"India has not accepted Pakistan's existence and committed aggression against us thrice in the past, thus its policy of building stockpiles of weapons is targeted against Pakistan.... The balance of power in the region is now heavily tilted in India's favor after the induction of the nuclear submarine in Indian navy.... On the other hand, America has been busy telling Pakistan that it should not take India as its enemy. Looking at Indian war preparation and undeniable proofs of its involvement in Balochistan lawlessness only an irrational person would consider it anything other than an enemy."

"Indian Nuclear Submarine Is A Threat To Regional Peace," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (07/28)

"The Indian leadership must realize that its annual increase in the defense budget is creating poverty and unemployment not only within its own borders but also in the neighboring countries. It should also realize that weapon-producing countries are actually exploiting us by encouraging an arms race amongst [developing states].... In order to end this arms race and to bring peace to the region, India must give up its aggressive designs."

"Indian Defense Preparations For Regional Domination," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (cir. 10,000) (07/28)

"India is a country where more than 40 percent of the population lives below the poverty line and many areas of the country still do not have basics like education, health and employment.... It is very unfortunate that despite these stark realities, the Indian leadership is creating war frenzy in the country. Following the nuclear submarine's inclusion in the Indian Navy, other countries in the region will also be compelled to take similar measures for their defense - thereby endangering regional peace."

"A Threatening Move," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/28)

"The induction of a nuclear submarine, Arihant, into the Indian Navy would trigger arms race in South Asia.... Under the circumstances, it would be hard for Islamabad to stay aloof from these developments, forcing it to follow suit.... The move would also provoke China, with which India claims being on a friendly footing.... This show of strength, uncalled for in the first place by any reckoning, runs counter to the goals of peace and security."

"India Boosts Its War Preparedness," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (07/28)

"The question arises what for this naval build-up is being prepared when India has no threat from its neighbors. It is an open secret now that India is spending so much on its defence forces to challenge any power not only in Asia but also at the international arena. At a time when people are fed up with wars, India is perhaps the only State on earth boosting its defence preparedness, which would be dangerous for peace in the region and beyond."

"New U.S. Efforts For Mideast Peace," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (07/28)

"America has sought Syria's help for permanent peace in the Middle East.... This is a fact that Israel is the only hurdle in the way of peace in the region and President Barack Obama understands it very well.... Since President Obama's speech in Jamia Al Azhar, a tension was created in the U.S.-Israel relations. So far several Obama administration's leading officials have scheduled their trips to Israel. Moreover, help has been sought from Syria for establishing permanent peace in the Middle East."

"Viable Palestinian State," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (07/28)

"No peace process in the Middle East can succeed unless there is a move towards the creation of a viable and sovereign Palestinians state.... There is a perception that what the Obama administration is really after is somehow or other forcing the Arab states to normalize relations with Israel while hardly moving beyond symbolic gestures to resolve the Palestinian issue. It is also being maintained that what Washington really desires is a front comprising the so-called moderate Arab states and Israel against Iran. A move of the type would alienate Palestinians and the world Muslim community."

(All circulation figures are based on estimation)
Feierstein